

3/25/11

Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Donna Masi, and I am here to oppose the passage of Raised Bill No 1030.

I believe that the only reason Senator Rob Kane sponsored bill 1030 is to remedy local land use issues in our hometown, Watertown. The Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission under the leadership of Chairman David Minnich, has had numerous lawsuits filed against it. These lawsuits are instituted by individuals who have been aggrieved by the unjust and sometimes arbitrary actions of his Commission.

Several years ago, as president of the Concerned Citizens for the Preservation of Watertown, I had occasion to contact the US Attorney's office and the State Attorney's office concerning the actions and conflict of interests of Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission members. I was advised by both offices that historically neither office could interfere with local land use issues. They indicated that these issues are decided at the local level by local officials and an aggrieved individual has the right to take the Commission to court.

Of course, taking a Town board to court is financially difficult enough for anyone to do, **but now, the passage of this bill will make it impossible.** While an aggrieved person has the right to seek a fair and just resolution to their land use issues, **this bill takes this right away.** It's an attempt to intimidate individuals into **not** suing local land use commissions for fear of huge financial reprisals should the courts rule against the individuals.

On the outside chance that this Committee approves this unfair and unjust bill regardless of how injurious it is to the litigant who has taken a Planning and Zoning Commission to court, then the Planning & Zoning Commission should owe double or triple damages to the litigant if he should win his case.

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Thank you